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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION

1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6157
(202) 225-2061
<https://cha.house.gov>

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ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS

JEN DAULBY, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

February 7, 2020

Mr. David Beirne
Director, FVAP
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
4800 Mark Center Drive, Suite 05E22
Alexandria, VA 22350-5000

Dear Director Beirne,

We write regarding our nation's overseas military voters and their families, who, by the very nature of their service to our country, unfortunately face significant obstacles and delays to casting their ballots. Specifically, we would like to offer clarification of what we believe is Congress' intent for the United States code section directly affecting the voting of overseas military personnel and their families.

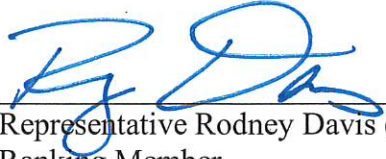
The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act addresses the procedures for collection and delivery of marked absentee ballots of overseas uniformed services voters. It has recently come to our attention that there is confusion on how broadly "Absent Uniformed Services Voter" is being interpreted in [52 U.S.C §20304\(b\)\(2\)](#). This specific section provides expedited mail delivery service for all marked absentee ballots of absent uniformed services voters. It has been indicated that "Absent Uniformed Services Voters" is currently only being interpreted to include the service member themselves. However, the applicable definition under the section [52 U.S.C. §20310\(1\)](#) for an "Absent Uniformed Services Voter" includes not only the service member but also "a spouse or dependent of a [service] member...who, by reason of the active duty or service of the member, is absent from the place of residence where the spouse or dependent is otherwise qualified to vote." Our goal in writing this letter is to clear up any confusion over the code's interpretation and ensure all eligible military spouses and dependents will also be afforded the use of expedited balloting materials.

The Committee on House Administration is tasked under House Rule 10(k)(1)(12) with oversight authority over federal elections. As Members of the Committee, we take voting very seriously and strive to make sure everyone who wants to vote is able to cast a ballot.

Thank you for all that you do to ensure our active duty military have every opportunity to exercise their right to vote while they are bravely serving our great nation. It is our hope that this clarification will alleviate any previous confusion, and we can guarantee military members and their families abroad to have their ballots expedited with the rapidly approaching 2020

presidential election. If you have any questions, please contact Keighle Joyce, Counsel, at Keighle.Joyce@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-8281. We look forward to your review and any follow up.

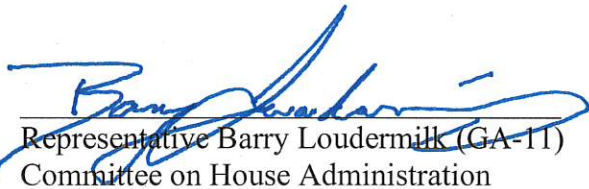
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rodney Davis", written over a horizontal line.

Representative Rodney Davis (IL-13)
Ranking Member
Committee on House Administration

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Walker", written over a horizontal line.

Representative Mark Walker (NC-06)
Committee on House Administration

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry Loudermilk", written over a horizontal line.

Representative Barry Loudermilk (GA-11)
Committee on House Administration